



Thorpe Marshes Wildlife Report 2012

The Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Thorpe St Andrew Marshes nature reserve – NWT Thorpe Marshes for short in this report and elsewhere – was established in 2011. It's the NWT's first nature reserve in Norwich, recognising the wildlife value of the marshes and protecting the area as an asset for people in Thorpe St Andrew and beyond.

This report summarises some of the observations of wildlife during 2012. It includes records from the monthly wildlife walks, plus records made by me or provided by several naturalists (see acknowledgements). We hope this report may reveal past records and encourage more recording, especially of under-recorded species.

The report is far from a full wildlife survey. A separate list of plants is in preparation, partly for reasons of space, and partly as this should be a more static list year to year. The invertebrates list is only a handful of a few showy species. The mammals list has just some casual records: small mammal trapping and effort with a bat box would yield more species.

Chris Durdin, January 2013

Acknowledgements

Records from Mike Burrows, Ricky Cleverley, Paul Davidson, Chris Durdin, James Emerson, Ian Lovering and Julia Weaver, plus some from the Yare Valley Wildlife website

<http://yarevalleywildlife.synthasite.com/bird-notes-2012.php>.

Gemma Walker, the NWT's Wildlife and Community Officer, assisted with the ID of some tricky invertebrates. Photos by Chris Durdin, unless otherwise noted.



NWT Thorpe Marshes, May; common blue damselfly, June; marsh harrier (Ian Lovering), June; guelder rose, August.

Key habitats

The gravel pit: since gravel extraction ceased, this is full of water and is now known as St Andrew's Broad. It attracts wintering ducks and other waterfowl, though few breeding birds.

A gravel spit, from which you can view the open water, and gravel banks adjacent to and opposite the spit, are used by loafing ducks, gulls and waders, and little ringed plovers come and go from these in spring.

Grazed marshes: to the east and north of the broad, running up to the railway line, are open grazing marshes on which there are cattle between May and October. Within this is the 'flood', often under water but also drying out partially or completely, around and within which are clumps of rushes and yellow flag iris.

Near to the railway bridge the grazing marshes grade into grazed fen with taller vegetation, mostly reed and reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*. There are also a few trees and scrub.

Ungrazed marsh: ranker vegetation around the broad, dominated by greater willowherb, increasingly invaded by willow and buddleia.

Ditches: most obvious running through the grazing marshes, where the vegetation community indicates good water quality, but also in the ungrazed marsh, including between the broad and the river.



St Andrew's Broad from Whitlingham, December 2012, with the River Yare in the foreground.

Guided walks and other events

There were monthly NWT guided walks led by Chris Durdin, promoted through the Town Council Newsletter, the two websites, posters and newspaper 'what's ons'. The 12 walks attracted 90 people through the year. Two guided walks for the Liberal Democrats and one for the RSPB Norwich Local Group attracted an additional 20 participants. About 60 people, mostly families, came to the NWT's family day on 30th June, doing pond-dipping, guided walks and other nature study.

Websites for NWT Thorpe Marshes

NWT: www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/Wildlife-in-Norfolk/Reserves/Thorpe-Marshes.aspx
www.honeyguide.co.uk/thorpemarshes.htm

Initials used in this report:

NWT: Norfolk Wildlife Trust. CP: Country Park (Whitlingham).

Review of the year

Early in **January**, the marshes were completely under water when the tidal river Yare overtopped its banks – here a more-or-less an annual occurrence. It was just possible to walk in wellingtons from the railway bridge to the mooring basin; for a complete circuit you would have needed waders. The flooding had completely gone for the monthly guided walk on 23rd January, when a highlight was a flock of about 100 teals flying round St Andrew's Broad. Early **February** brought snow and a frozen broad; the hard weather led to 140 lapwings flying through on 5th February.

March started much milder, with an emerging red admiral on 1st March in Whitlingham Lane. An avocet, swimming on the broad, and black-tailed godwit were surprising visitors. By mid-March, lesser celandines were flowering by the riverside footpath and the first marsh marigolds and cuckoo flowers showed later in the month. It was so warm on 28th March that members of the public were having picnics and barbeques. That was a notable exception in this year's cool and wet spring and summer. Sedge and willow warblers arrived and sang prominently in **April**, when the grazing marshes looked at their best with marsh marigolds and lady's smock flowering and great sheets of creeping buttercups. In **May**, showy yellow flag irises dominated patches of the grazed marshes, and in scrubrier areas whitethroats were especially noisy.

June here was poor for butterflies, as everywhere, but dragonflies, including Norfolk hawkers, were very noticeable, including on the NWT's family day. Many people were treated to the sight of a barn owl hunting during the long, light evenings, marsh harriers visited regularly and two grasshopper warblers regularly 'reeled' in June and **July**. The ungrazed marshes were at their most colourful in July and **August**, despite this year's poor summer, with the pinks and purples of hemp agrimony, purple loosestrife and marsh woundwort, hundreds of elegant common blue damselflies and still many dragonflies, increasingly of later emerging species.

Summer colours persisted into **September**; and Cetti's warblers and robins resumed singing after their brief summer break and a few migrants appeared, including red admiral butterfly, silver Y moth, lapwings and green sandpiper. **October** saw flocks of fieldfares moving through the river valley, the return of meadow pipits onto the grazing marsh and an emergence of many scores of caddis flies. **November** was very mild, with low numbers of ducks – none at all on one occasion – and a scattering of siskins and redpolls, the latter feeding on the many weed seeds.

A cold snap on 11th & 12th **December** froze over most of the Broad and brought an influx of snipe to the marshes and ducks onto the remaining open areas of water. It turned milder and wetter in the second half of the month, with a male goosander in the Broad on Boxing Day a nice end-of-year sighting.



Flooded marsh from the railway bridge, 5th January;
pretty in pink, purple loosestrife and hemp agrimony, 9th August.



A dewy day, 10th October; ice on the path, 13th December.

Birds

Mute swan <i>Cygnus olor</i>	Resident and present on the marshes and broad all year. They appeared to be nesting in the vegetation on the 'island', but presumably failed as there were no cygnets.
Greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i>	Though a resident species, mostly present on the reserve during spring and summer. Three young seen on 30 th April and 21 st May.
Canada goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>	Though a resident species, mostly present on the reserve during spring and summer. No evidence of breeding.
Egyptian goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	Resident, but erratically present. Two often on the broad in the winter, then off and on during the spring and summer.
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	2 on 5 th Feb, 3 on 29 th Feb, 1 on 23 rd April.
Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>	Occasional in winter or early spring (e.g. 1♂ on 15 th March), perhaps moving to and fro from Whitlingham CP rather than the larger numbers farther east in the Yare Valley.
Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>	Winter visitor, also seen in display flight, but no evidence of breeding. Formerly bred. Peak count in early 2012 of 65, 7 th Feb, when 80 per cent of the broad was covered in ice. Peak count in late 2012 of 41, 14 th Dec, but 20-30 then a more typical count, dipping to nil on 22 Nov, with higher numbers coinciding with colder weather.
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	Winter visitor, especially in cold weather, and lingering into the spring. Often in the vegetation on the edge of St Andrew's Broad but also on the flood. A flock of 100 over the broad on the guided walk on 23 rd Jan; 110 on 23 rd Feb. 2 on 29 th Feb, 253 on 11 th Feb (JE). Pairs present on both the broad and the flood on 15 th March, and again on 23 rd April (2 on the broad, 4 on the flood).
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Spring and summer visitor, to the dykes and broad, with breeding pairs present from 29 th Feb. Absent from the broad during the winter, though often on the river at this time, these sometimes the semi-domestic mallards from River Green.
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	Male on St Andrew's Broad on 14 th Dec.
Pochard <i>Aythya farina</i>	Winter visitor, with occasional birds in spring and summer, Numbers tend to increase in cold weather, but quite variable as they move to and fro from Whitlingham CP. Peak of 88 on 23 rd Feb, and numbers staying high with 47 on 29 th Feb and 58 on 1 st March. A late group of 5 (2♂ and 3♀) on 7 th May and a pair on 4 th & 5 th June – these last two records probably the pair over-summering at Whitlingham CP.

Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	The bird at Whitlingham CP was seen to fly over to Thorpe Broad on 21 st January by Andy Musgrove (via JE).
Tufted duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Winter visitor but some (non-breeders?) present until at least 20 th April. Numbers build up sooner than the pochards but also tend to increase in cold weather. The exchange with Whitlingham CP can be obvious: on the guided walk on 15 th March, there were just 22 on St Andrew's Broad but 90 flew in across the river, making a total of 112. Other counts notable counts were 88 on 23 rd Feb, 102 on 23 rd Feb (all counts are minimum numbers, but on this occasion particularly so as they were actively diving) and the year's peak count of 170, 13 th March. Quite slow to build up in the mild autumn, though 3 in eclipse plumage on 7 th Sept. Fewer than 10 throughout November (1 on 5 th Nov, 4 on 9 th Nov, none on 22 nd Nov, 4 on 26 th Nov, 6 on 30 th Nov). Numbers then building to 95 on 16 th Dec but in the range 20–60 more usual in December.
Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Two on 18 th Feb. An immature male was present from 16 th Feb to 1 April, and definitely absent on 2 nd April. A female on 8 th Dec (Yare Valley Wildlife website).
Smew <i>Mergellus albellus</i>	11 th Feb (JE); redhead flew up, over the river and landed on Whitlingham Great Broad. 18 th Feb (MB); redhead present for two hours.



Goosander; Slavonian grebe with gadwall (James Emerson).

Goosander <i>Mergus merganser</i>	Occasional winter visitor. Redhead on 14 th Feb; a female on 16 th December; a male on 26 th December (seen from Whitlingham CP!) also said to be present on other days around this time.
Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Seen throughout the year, though whether they are always present is difficult to say as when they are silent they are surprisingly unobtrusive.
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Present in low numbers: it's unusual not to see 1-3 birds on the broad or flying over, but rarely more. A bird on 23 rd March had a very pale head, but this is no longer thought to be a reliable feature for the 'continental' subspecies <i>sinensis</i> , with an analysis of gular pattern/angle more important. James Emerson has looked carefully at cormorants at Whitlingham CP and concluded that there is a mix of <i>P c carbo</i> and <i>P c sinensis</i> present with a majority of <i>carbo</i> , and the same is presumably true at Thorpe.
Little egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Occasional. Singles on 21 st June, 5 th July, 18 th Nov.
(According to Rare Bird Alert, and noted on the Yare Valley Wildlife website, on 10th Feb a great white egret flew over Whitlingham CP 'and towards Thorpe Broad'.)	
Grey heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Absent during the winter, but 1-3 regularly during spring and summer.
Slavonian grebe <i>Podiceps auritus</i>	One, 15 th December (photographed by JE)
Great crested grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	Resident, moving between St Andrew's Broad and the river. In previous years has bred locally, with obvious juveniles with parents on the river, but no young seen in 2012.
Red Kite <i>Milvus milvus</i>	On 12 th May, 1 st July and a juvenile on 15 th July (all per Yare Valley Wildlife website).
Marsh harrier <i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Summer visitor. One regularly seen in late spring and summer, perhaps from a pair said to be nesting a kilometre or so father east (down river). Two marsh harriers were hunting during the evening NWT guided walk on 15 th June.
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Resident, fairly often seen soaring or hunting moving over the marshes from nearby wooded areas.
Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	Two over on 17th April, singles on 30 th April, 26 th May and 15 th July. (Yare Valley Wildlife website).
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Resident, fairly often hovering over the grazing marshes.
Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Singles on 29 th April, 7 th & 26 th May and 5 th , 6 th & 23 rd June.

Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	One on 12 th May (Yare Valley Wildlife website). Also 2 on 9 th January 2013, and it would be surprising if the birds nesting on the cathedral were not there more often in 2012.
Water rail <i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	Winter visitor, one or two present November to March, often very vocal. Most often heard in the area near the reserve's entrance, in the ditch by the railway bridge, the wide ditch west of the path to the mooring basin or around the double gate with the NWT sign. However one calling on 1 st March was in the ditch by the kissing gate, far from the usual area, suggesting two present. Also, on 13 th Dec, one reported from the gravel shore across the Broad when there was also one calling in the usual area.
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Resident, presumably breeds, though often quite secretive. Can be seen, with luck, on ditches or around the edges of St Andrew's Broad. Also in the wide ditch parallel to Bungalow Lane.
Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	Winter visitor, sometimes in double figures e.g. 16 on 26 th December, but more often fewer than 10.
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Springtime visitor, but did not breed. 2 on 1 st March, 2 on 23 rd March, 4 on 28 th March, two of which looked like a territorial pair, 2 on 30 th April. 'Loafing birds, possibly from sewage works,' suggests one observer.
Avocet <i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	One swimming with gulls on St Andrew's Broad on 14 th March.
Little ringed plover <i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Spring visitor, probably attempting to breed without success. Four on 31 March, and regularly through April. Seemed to be absent for much of May, then regular again in June (e.g. 2 on NWT walk, 15 th June, 4 on the flood, 9 th July), either on the flood or around the Broad.
Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Two people independently saw one when the broad was part-frozen one day in February (via JE).
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Non-breeding birds through much of the year; formerly bred. Winter numbers very variable, with more coming in during hard weather; quite often absent, also flocks moving through. A few examples from the first winter periods: 140, 5 th Feb; 16, 29 Feb; 30, 1 st March. A regular summer flock, presumably failed breeders and non-breeders from the Low Countries or Scandinavia: recorded on 27 th July, 45 on 9 th Aug, 50 on 10 th August. Lower numbers in the second autumn/winter period: 27 flying west on 29 th October, 6 on 30 th Nov, 8 on 11 th Dec, 3 on 29 th Dec, but often none.
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	One on the edge of the Broad in frozen conditions on 5 th Feb; singles on 23 rd March (photographed) and 3 rd April; 2 on the flood, 14 th March; 12 on 15 th March.
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	A flock of 28 in January (RC, no date). Three on the flood in freezing conditions on 5 th Feb.
Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Winter visitor, including March, with numbers peaking in hard weather; formerly bred. Often small numbers (< 10) sitting partly concealed on the edge of the Broad; may be in larger numbers on or around the flood and the wettest parts of the grazing marshes, with counts mostly dependent on how many fly and so underestimate numbers present. Minimum of 60, mostly taking flight around the frozen flood, 11 th December; 15+ on 13 th Dec.
Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	One on the Broad, 15 th March.



Black-tailed godwit, with lapwing and black-headed gulls, and little ringed plovers, March (Ricky Cleverley).

Common sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Passage migrant. 3 on 7 th May, 1 on 30 th April, 1 on 6 th May, 7 on 26 th May.
Green sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Passage migrant and winter visitor. Peak count of 4, 9 th August. Singles on 29 th Feb, 3 rd April, 7 th Sept, 11 th Dec, 14 th Dec.

Wood sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	Singles (the same one?) on 24 th June and 26 th June, and 5 th July.
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Uncommon spring migrant, one on 26 th May.
Black-headed gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Winter visitor, sometimes in large numbers, with birds loafing around or washing on the Broad. High count of 400 on 13 th December in freezing conditions, but 80-100 would be more typical.
Little gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>	Vagrant. 11 were reported by Barry Harding to the Yare Valley Birds website on the 24 th April, the same day as the spring Arctic tern passage.
Common gull <i>Larus canus</i>	Winter visitor, in smaller numbers mixed in with black-headed gulls, e.g. 25 on 13 th December, though up to 10 is more usual.
Lesser black-backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	In single figures with other gulls, e.g. 9 on 28 March. Largely absent in the second winter period.
Herring gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	In single figures with other gulls, e.g. 2 on 28 March. Absent in the second winter period.
Great black-backed gull <i>Larus marinus</i>	One on the broad with other large gulls on 8 th August (JE).
Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Two in flight on 7 th May, 1 on 21 st June. Rather scarce: in previous years, more regular along the river in late spring / summer.
Arctic tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Vagrant. 24 th April: 4 were reported by Barry Harding to the Yare Valley Birds website, and 2 on 30 th April (RC). These coincided with an influx elsewhere.
Feral pigeon <i>Columba livia</i>	Not usually on the reserve, though the feral pigeons/white doves on River Green can sometimes be seen flying over, especially from the railway bridge.
Stock dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	Resident, though more obvious in spring and summer. Often drop into bare areas on the flood, on the edge of the Broad or paths, presumably looking for seeds. They may be less often seen in the winter due to feeding in nearby gardens: up to four were regularly in my garden in Thunder Lane from October to December. Usually just single birds in winter, but 4 flying over on 13 th Dec. Other groups noted include 5 on 2 nd April and 8 on 7 th June, but such a regular part of the scene that usually not counted: 2-6 would be typical in the spring and summer.
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Resident, often outnumbering stock doves. No doubt breeding in trees adjacent to the reserve.
Collared dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Resident, in Whitlingham Lane, rather than on the reserve.
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Summer visitor, presumably breeding, as they were regularly heard and seen and often very vocal and their preferred hosts – sedge warbler, reed warbler, dunnock and meadow pipit are on the reserve. Recorded from 17 th April (two); last heard singing on 15 th June.
Barn owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	On 15 th June, those on the NWT's guided walk had prolonged and close views of a barn owl feeding on the grazing marshes in good light at around 9pm. Also seen on 31 st May and 7 June and no doubt by others at other times in June. It seems likely it was nesting somewhere off the reserve to the east.
Tawny owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	Resident, occasionally heard from trees adjacent to the reserve.
Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	Summer visitor, nesting locally, so often over the reserve. 30 on 26 th April, 'lots' noted on 7 th May.
Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Surprisingly scarce; used to be seen fairly often on the river, but not so this year. One over the Broad, 15 th March; on a dyke, 26 th April; 23 rd June, 1 over the NWT double gates, 23 rd Dec.
Green woodpecker <i>Picus viridis</i>	Resident, in the trees adjacent to the reserve. Drumming on 1 st March
Great spotted woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	Resident, often flying over the reserve and in the trees adjacent to the reserve, especially those adjacent to the railway bridge. Also recorded on the large sallows by the permissive path.
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	Resident, often on the marshes.
Jay <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Resident in adjacent wooded areas, but often over or on the marshes during the autumn.
Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	Resident. 25 around the flood on 7 th May.
Carrion crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	Resident. The regular presence of crows and jackdaws may discourage lapwings and snipe from returning to breed, and may affect the success of little ringed plovers.
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	Resident. Often heard in the cypress tree by the railway bridge, but rarely on the reserve, though there was one in sallows on 11 th December.
Blue tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Resident, often in mixed tit flocks out of the breeding season

Great tit <i>Parus major</i>	Resident, often in mixed tit flocks out of the breeding season
Coal tit <i>Periparus ater</i>	Not on the reserve, heard in the cypress tree by the railway bridge.
Marsh tit <i>Poecile palustris</i>	One in the shallows by the mooring basin, 13 th December. In the following days, twice I thought I heard a distant <i>pit-chew</i> marsh tit call from across the river.
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Birds flying over and singing occasionally, but not consistently, in summer.
Sand martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	A few migrants reported in April.
Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Birds moving through in spring and autumn, but not breeding.
House martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Lots over the reserve on 7 th May, and seen at other times during spring and summer.
Cetti's warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>	Resident, and singing through most of the autumn and winter especially, but not only, on bright days. Peak count (MB) was six singing birds, and to hear them singing from three or four locations in spring was typical. From territory mapping in May there was a minimum of four clear territories within the reserve and a fifth centred just off the reserve to the west. Cetti's warblers are one of the star and ever-present species of the nature reserve. No information on breeding success, which is generally true for passerines on the reserve.
Long-tailed tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Resident. Groups are seen year-round, often in mixed flocks with blue tits and great tits. The riverside trees are a favoured location, but also in the shallows by the permissive path.
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	First heard on 20 th March, and frequently heard in tall trees around the edge of the reserve. After a midsummer silence, heard again in September, presumably migrants on temporary territories.
Willow warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	First heard on 31 st March. Two territories on the reserve, the most prominent being the bird that sang from the shallows around the NWT double gate, seen well on NWT walk on 20 th April. The second territory was adjacent to Bungalow Lane. A third sang just off the reserve to the north, between the two railway lines.
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	First heard on 1 st April. Often singing in adjacent scrub and also near the permissive path. One of the up to nine species of warblers you might hope to hear in spring.
Garden warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	Sang prominently in early June by the permissive path.
Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	Competes with sedge warbler to be the most prominent and numerous warbler. First record, 26 th April. From CBC-style territory mapping in May, there appeared to be at least four territories on the reserve, plus three immediately adjacent. Three of these four were in the unmanaged marsh between the river and the broad; the fourth was in the developing scrub south of the permissive path. Additional birds were singing in the wet field west of the footpath, in the bramble field by Whitlingham Lane and just over the railway line to the north.
Grasshopper warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	First record, 26 th April. One or two singing for much of June and July. The most obvious was close to the permissive path, often clearly heard from the railway bridge. A second singing bird – and they sang at the same time, so there were certainly two – was in the unmanaged marsh between the river and the broad.



Whitethroat (Ian Lovering): up to seven territories on or adjacent to the reserve.
Grasshopper warbler: two singing males for much of the spring and summer.

Sedge warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	First record, 6 th April. CBC-style territory mapping in May revealed a minimum of six singing males of the reserve, plus two more immediately adjacent, namely in the wet field west of the footpath and in the bramble field by Whitlingham Lane.
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Marsh warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	A description of a warbler in song on 5 th June matched marsh warbler, though it wasn't seen well. "It was mimicking away for around 20 minutes before it was silenced by the rain. [It mimicked] a huge variety of calls: pied wagtail, common tern, green- and goldfinch and kingfisher were ones I recognised but many more I didn't" (RC). This record coincided with an influx of marsh warblers elsewhere in eastern England. It wasn't seen or heard on subsequent days. A vocal garden warbler sang in the same area on evenings following this record.
Reed warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	Four singing males, including one in the reed rond on the river.
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Resident. At least three territories, all in the rank marsh close to the river, plus an additional territory just west of the footpath.
Treecreeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Recorded on Bungalow Lane in September.
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Astonishingly infrequent. They seem to have disappeared from Thorpe St Andrew as breeding birds in recent years, and are scarce in winter. Some groups moving over the reserve in autumn.
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	Resident, often in song and presumably breeding.
Fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	The Yare valley is always a flyway for fieldfares and redwings in autumn, including well away from the river, off the reserve. This year was noted for influxes on the east coast. Records for the reserve relate to when visits coincided with migrating flocks, which were: 40 flying west on 28 th October, and flocks of 60 and 110 flying west on 29 th October.
Song thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Often singing from trees adjacent to the reserve.
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Noted in flight on 12 th October. No doubt many unrecorded flocks moved through.
Mistle thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Occasionally overflying the reserve, or heard singing in the distance.
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Resident, most often seen in the hawthorns by the river. Back in song from 10 th September.
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Singles reported on 4 th and 15 th May.
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Resident. Frequently in and out of the hawthorns and willowherb by the riverside footpath, and the buddleias and the path between the railway bridge and the mooring basin.
Yellow wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	One in flight on 6 th May and 7 th May.
Grey wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	One in the first winter period (JE), no dates.
Pied wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	Seen either in flight or on the shingle spit and edges between 31 st March and 28 th July, the last date being a juvenile on the shingle.
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Probably breeding, with a different wintering population. One in song flight on 20 th April on NWT walk. They disappear in summer but reappear in autumn and a small group seems to winter on the grazing marshes, for example seven on 28 th October and 12 th November. The winter records depend on them being disturbed and flying up, and they are probably under-recorded as they feed in among the thick grass in wet, inaccessible areas,
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Resident in areas adjacent to the reserve.
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Resident in areas adjacent to the reserve, often singing from the cypress tree by the railway bridge and overflying the reserve.
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Resident, often overflying the reserve, or in small groups in riverside trees.
Siskin <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Winter visitor, usually ones or twos picked up on flight call as they fly over. On 26th December, about 150 siskins and redpolls in a mixed flock flew along the river.
Linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	A pair seemed be based, presumably nesting, in the dry bramble field adjacent to the reserve and were regularly on or over the reserve in spring and summer.
Lesser redpoll <i>Carduelis cabaret</i>	Winter visitor, including odd birds picked up on flight call as they fly over, but also small groups feeding on seeds of mugwort and greater willowherb. On 26th December, about 150 siskins and redpolls in a mixed flock flew along the river.
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Heard or seen around the railway several times.
Reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Resident, though may leave the reserve to feed in local gardens in late winter. Four territories spread fairly evenly around the reserve.

Appendix 1 – Escapes

Black swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i>	Photographed in the mooring basin on 11 th August, presumably the bird often seen at Whitlingham CP.
Appendix 2 – List of birds recorded in previous years (including flying over, no doubt incomplete).	
Whooper swan, pink-footed goose, brent goose, scaup, pintail, mandarin, scaup, bittern, little grebe, crane, whimbrel, curlew, greenshank, black tern, turtle dove, short-eared owl, rook, stonechat, wheatear, golden oriole.	

Mammals

No bat detector work or small mammal trapping was done. It's highly likely, not least given regular hunting kestrels and barn owl, that there are other rodents to be recorded.

Common shrew	Dead specimen on the riverside public footpath, 10 th August.
Mole	Molehills in the rough grass near the tidal flap and the mooring basin.
Noctule	On 13 th November just before noon a large bat, probably a noctule, flying at tree-top level over the broad and river, chased by black-headed gulls.
Water vole	Seen on NWT family day, 30 th June.
Fox (Otter)	7 th June, hunting along the back edge of the flood. Seen in or around the area in recent years, including swimming in St Andrew's Broad, but no records confirmed in 2012.)
Muntjac	13 th June and 29 th August, both times on the footpath by the river (JW). Corpse seen by Paul Davidson, 9 th July, and a dog walker reported one being rescued from a ditch during the summer.
Chinese water deer	11 th April, 6 th June, 2 on 27 th September and probably other times not noted.
Roe deer	17 th July, seen from the railway bridge, walking by the fence on the reserve (JW).

Damselflies and Dragonflies

Main flight periods noted.

Banded demoiselle (Banded agrion)	<i>Calopteryx splendens</i>	July-Sept
Large red damselfly	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>	July
Common blue damselfly	<i>Enallagma cyathigerum</i>	June-Sept, often abundant.
Hairy dragonfly	<i>Brachytron pratense</i>	June
Migrant hawker	<i>Aeshna mixta</i>	September
Brown hawker	<i>Aeshna grandis</i>	July-September
Norfolk hawker	<i>Aeshna isosceles</i>	June-August
Emperor dragonfly	<i>Anax imperator</i>	June-Aug
Four-spotted chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	June-Aug
Black-tailed skimmer	<i>Orthetrum cancellatum</i>	June-Aug
Common darter	<i>Sympetrum striolatum</i>	August-September, plus a late record on 5 th November.



Banded demoiselle (Paul Davidson), 23 July. Norfolk hawker (Ian Lovering), 5 July.

Butterflies

It was widely noted that 2012 was a poor year for butterflies in the UK, and the lack of butterflies on the buddleia and other nectar sources at Thorpe Marshes was noticeable.

Large white (July, August)
 Small white (June)
 Green-veined white (July, PD)
 Orange-tip (May)
 Brimstone (Aug)
 Small tortoiseshell (July, PD)
 Comma (July, Aug, Sept) *top right*
 Painted lady (Sept, PD)
 Red admiral (March, July, Aug & Sept)
 Peacock (April, May)
 Ringlet (July) *right*
 Meadow brown (August)
 Small copper (July)
 Holly blue (July)



Orange-tip butterfly

Left: the egg, seen laid on 23rd May, is on the stalk of the right hand flower bud of lady's smock.
 Right: a female taking nectar on early wintercress

Moths

No moth trapping has been done: these are casual records. The number is the British checklist number for macro-moths, as given in *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland* by Paul Waring & Martin Townsend. Small magpie is a micro-moth, hence no number.

1640 Drinker moth caterpillar *Euthrix potaria* 6th June (JE)
 1980 Eyed hawkmoth *Smerinthus ocellata* on the guided walk on 21st May
 2221 Mullein moth caterpillars *Shargacucullia verbasci* 9th July
 2441 Silver Y *Autographa gamma* 7th Sept
 Small magpie moth *Eurrhynx hortulata* 7th June (JE)



Mullein moth caterpillar, on figwort; 'cinnamon sedge' caddis fly; eyed hawkmoth.

Other notable invertebrates

Water stick insect <i>Ranatra linearis</i>	In St Andrew's Broad by the gravel spit on the NWT walk on 12 th October.
Buff-tailed bumblebee (<i>Bombus terrestris</i> ?)	(IC)
Common carder bee (<i>Bombus pascuorum</i> ?)	(IC)
7-spot ladybird <i>Coccinella septempunctata</i>	
Lesser marsh grasshopper <i>Chorthippus albomarginatus</i>	28 th August – several in vegetation along ditches east of the cattle pound (JE).
Mayfly <i>Ephemeroptera</i>	species unknown
Twin-lobed deer fly (a horse-fly) <i>Chrysops relictus</i>	8 th August (JE)
A caddis fly (photo 10 th Oct), probably <i>Limnephilus flavicornis</i> ,	A common species found by lakes and ponds throughout Britain. Anglers know the <i>Limnephilus</i> species as 'cinnamon sedges'. There was a big emergence of these – certainly hundreds – in October, noted on the NWT walk on 12 th October with a few still around on the NWT walk 12 th November.

Molluscs: no aquatic molluscs were identified this year. These photographs are of two terrestrial species. Below left: *Cepaea nemoralis* Brown-lipped snail. This is the plain, unstriped form. Below right: *Arianta arbustorum*, sometimes called the copse snail.



Amphibians and reptiles

Common lizard	On the railway bridge, 10 th July.
Common frog	I saw one only once, in July, and failed to find any spawn. Surprisingly scarce.
Newt sp	Caught during dyke-dipping on the NWT family day on 30 th June.

Fungi

Very incomplete!

Velvet shank <i>Flammulina velutipes</i>	Clumps on the felled poplar by the tidal flap, December.
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Twin-lobed deer fly *Chrysops relictus* (James Emerson); common lizard (Julia Weaver); velvet shank.